

Zechariah 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.

Analysis

And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. The levanim (לְבָנִים, white horses) symbolize victory, conquest, and triumph—white being associated with purity, righteousness, and divine glory. In Revelation 6:2, the white horse's rider goes forth conquering. Christ Himself rides a white horse at His second coming (Revelation 19:11), emphasizing white as the color of righteous judgment and ultimate victory.

The fourth chariot has berodim amutsim (בְּרֹדִים אֲמֻצִּים, grisled/spotted and strong/bay horses). Berodim means speckled or mottled—mixed colors suggesting varied purposes or comprehensive scope. Amutsim means strong, vigorous, or powerful—these horses possess special strength for their assigned task. The mixed coloring may indicate diverse judgments or the complexity of God's providential workings among nations.

Together, the four chariots with different colored horses represent the totality of God's sovereign administration of judgment and blessing throughout the earth. No aspect of history escapes divine governance—war, famine, victory, and strength all proceed from God's throne to accomplish His purposes.

Historical Context

White horses in ancient Near Eastern culture symbolized royal victory. Persian and Greek conquerors rode white horses in triumphal processions. Zechariah

appropriates this imagery to show that ultimate victory belongs to Yahweh, not earthly empires. Though Persia appeared dominant, God's white-horsed chariot would ultimately prevail.

The grisdled (spotted) and strong horses going forth (v. 7) represent vigorous divine action across all the earth. Their mixed coloring suggests the varied means God employs to accomplish His purposes—sometimes through war, sometimes through peace, sometimes through prosperity, sometimes through judgment. The vision assured the struggling Jewish community that God's powerful agents actively worked for their restoration.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the symbolism of white horses representing victory and conquest encourage you to trust in God's ultimate triumph over evil?
2. What does the variety of horse colors and assignments teach about the complexity and wisdom of God's providential governance?
3. How should anticipation of Christ's return on a white horse (Revelation 19:11) shape your understanding of current world events?

Interlinear Text

וּבִמְרֹכָבָה הַשְּׁלֹשׁ יָת סוּסֵי יָם לָבֵן יָם וּבִמְרֹכָבָה

chariot

H4818

And in the third

H7992

horses

H5483

white

H3836

chariot

H4818

אֲמָצִים: בְּרֹדֶי יָם סוּסֵי יָם הָרְבֵּעַ יָת

and in the fourth

H7243

horses

H5483

grisled

H1261

and bay

H554

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 6:2 (Parallel theme): And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Revelation 6:8 (Parallel theme): And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Zechariah 1:8 (Parallel theme): I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.